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Committee on Public Safety
Joint Legislative Budget

May 22, 2011

The Honorable Don Knabe, Chair
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Chairman Knabe and Metro Boardmembers,

I write in strong support of Boardmember Mark Ridley-Thomas's proposal that a light rail station in Leimert Park and underground grade separation in the Park Mesa Heights area be added to plans for construction of the Crenshaw/LAX light rail line.

Having spent years of my childhood living in Leimert Park, and as the Assemblymember who represents the area where the line will operate, I take a strong interest in Metro's decision concerning the line's configuration and the community impacts of that decision.

I well recall the community consensus and anticipation in the 1980s for what was expected to be a "spur line" eventually connecting the future east/west subway beneath Wilshire Boulevard to LAX. Thirty years later our community has endured massive scaling back on that vision, as the subway station at Wilshire was eliminated from Metro's plans and Crenshaw's light rail line was truncated at both ends, going no farther north than the Expo Line and failing to carry passengers directly into LAX in the south. We have had enough of disappointments and broken promises.

As we struggle to sustain the pedestrian-friendly African Village, to protect the residential ambience of Leimert Park, and to re-vitalize Crenshaw's businesses, we need Metro's Board to heed the united voice of our community: A Leimert Park station with an underground segment extending south to 60th Street is a need—not an option.

New York's Wall Street, the financial center of America, brings sellers and buyers to market daily via the #1 underground train. Crenshaw Boulevard is the Wall Street of South Los Angeles and needs its rail line underground as well. Railroad tracks divide communities, yet South L.A. needs a united Crenshaw – one without a "moving wall" that turns it into an obstacle course for traffic and pedestrians. Our Crenshaw Line should be an artery bringing life-sustaining human traffic into the heart of the community: Arteries are embedded and protected below the surface – which is where our rail line needs to be.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H. Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Holly J. Mitchell
Assemblymember